

MEMCON OF SECRETARY ALBRIGHT/RUSSIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER PRIMAKOV DINNER AT THE G-8 DENVER SUMMIT,
BUCKHORN EXCHANGE, JUNE 19, 1997

Participants: Secretary Albright

Russian Foreign Minister Primakov

DepSec Talbott

RELEASE IN FULL

G. Mamedov

P. Afanassenko, US Inter.

V. Dashko, RU Inter.

that
Primakov: I would like to open our discussions first and foremost with a very serious problem — Nagorno-Karabakh. We are concerned, I'm afraid, of all ~~of~~ ^{will} the three sides ^{will} responding to us officially and rejecting everything. The Armenians stepped back from their previous position.

✓ This may be a big negative in that it reflects how they feel about us being together -- the U.S. & Russia. I think we should act because if we don't, we will be nothing more than paper tigers.

seen as
Talbott: I saw the text of the three Presidents regarding N-K.

also
Primakov: Yes, I saw it also, and showed it to Yeltsin and I think it is a plan of great importance. However, we should do something else. I think we should agree on a course of action. This should be confidential, but has to show teeth. You, the U.S., can do something with the Azeris vis-à-vis the oil weapon. You can say something like this: you will not encourage your companies to help on oil if things are not settled. With respect to Armenia, we could use the "weapons weapon." In other words, Russia could give them weapons while the U.S. could play the oil thing.

frustrate not to
Naturally, we have to do something on both sides. The Armenians did not even try to analyze our proposal -- they only went for full N-K independence. The Azeris insisted on autonomy for N-K, but only in Azerbaijan. It was what I call a rigid vertical solution. They made a definite step backward with respect to the 21-point document that we put together for them. Tar-Petrosian said to me earlier in my discussions with him that this could be a good basis for a solution and now he has backed off.

Mamedov: Just like the situation in Bosnia. By the way, I have a

nonpaper for you on Iran. {He hands it over to Talbott.}

Primakov: After you gave your Iran paper to me, I told my President about it and said that this proposal of yours was for us to take a good look at the situation. We are investigating all of the facts in your paper and here is our first response to it. Your facts are not quite exact. There are some things that are true and we have taken some steps already, for instance, we have revoked one of the special licenses.

Mamedov: We are very much concerned that our President will be ^{and assuring him} bringing this issue up with President Clinton ^{which would be} that our country needs to be seen as living up to its commitments. We do not wish to have it appear that the Russian side is doing nothing. All this talk that we are giving missiles to Iran is a ^{pile} pot of lies. Chernomyrdin will once again be talking to Gore about this. The license that we canceled is the Samara license.

Primakov: In some of your points, things have simply not been confirmed. My people are learning about actions which are taking place and not all of your information is turning out to be true.

Mamedov: We clarified to you that we need to talk to specialists. In the GCC these issues were already reviewed.

Albright: Would you reconsider sales to the Bush ^{ehr} reactor? ^{Because} assistance there will build Iranian expertise?

Primakov: We cannot go back on contracts that we already have. These are all under IAEA ^{safeguards}.

Albright: We see cooperation between you and Iran on uranium mining and production, the nuclear graphite reactor, heavy water.....

Primakov: Lets do this, let Gore complain to Chernomyrdin and they ^{we} would initiate a better review. If you remember, ~~there was signed~~ a document on intentions, but this was before I got my current job. It is true that back in 1995 the Minister of Atomic Energy said it would help with mines and accelerators. We put a stop to all of that; we are not assisting them with anything. The GCC will have all of the answers because Minatom has already reported to them. If any issues still remain we can simply let the IAEA do a list. Iran was visited by IAEA inspectors.

{Primakov then reads from his paper and says that he is reading from a letter he received from Iranian FM Veliyati.}

This is the first time that Veliyati answered me directly. "Iran is in a position of wishing to find a settlement to this issue, nonetheless, Iran will not take any actions to put a stop to the Middle East crises." This is the first time that a direct statement was made by Veliyati. There is a 60-40 chance that Veliyati will stay in his current job but that won't change things anyway with respect to world terrorism. Veliyati goes on to say "Iran ^{is} condemns the situation and wants to participate in finding a solution." I think he wants to get Iran out of its isolation regarding WMD. "Iran is against proliferation and wants to put a stop to chemical weapons."

I sent Posavalyuk to Iran and we found out that in contrast to previous attempts to avoid giving any answers, he now says, for instance, on human rights, "we respect human rights in spite of the actions taken by the West and we are using our law enforcement agencies to protect such rights."

Albright: I have a question regarding the sale of S-10^A missiles. (Mamedov interjects that Russia calls them S-300^O). There are reports that you are selling these S-10^A missiles. ✓

Primakov: Madeleine, by saying what I am going to say I am risking my good name and reputation, but we have had absolutely no contacts on such missile sales. Now, this is not to say that 2 or 3 years from now someone won't wish to sell these, but I do not know anything about any plans to do so.

The information you are getting with regard to S-300^O missiles might be nothing more than abstract, hypothetical discussions between potential suppliers and customers, but there are absolutely no contacts, not even draft proposals, on any S-300^O sales. Moreover, no such documents could ever be approved without Russian MFA approval.

Albright: What about any old contracts that may have been held on previous deals?

Primakov: There have been no decisions and no discussions of any old contracts, However, we fulfilled old contracts that we had signed earlier. ✓

Mind you, this did not include any S-300^D missiles.

Talbott: I have a question and a suggestion. We have witnessed several conversations and there is a feeling of frustration when it comes to facts. Yuri [Mamedov] and I can talk tomorrow regarding the establishment of a confidential channel to get our experts together on this issue.

Primakov: You should get some of our special services to talk to each other.

Talbott: Let's leave aside the question of exactly who and what agencies should take part. I think a channel is necessary so that we have a reliable and confidential way of airing the facts to each other.

Mamedov: You have questions about what we're doing in Iran — we have questions about what you're doing in Afghanistan.

Talbott: This channel could be used to explore questions in both directions.

Albright: I think we should do that. Let Strobe and Yuri develop this idea tomorrow and report back to us.

Yevgeny, I want to talk to you about Iraq.

Primakov: I asked around ^{and} got a feeling that attitudes have sharpened. Maybe it was because ^{the} new President is coming in Iran. The U.S./UK-sponsored resolution in the Security Council calls for new sanctions and I feel that this would be counter-productive. Few of the members would support it, certainly not Russia, ^{but} at the same time we are working on trying to pound it into the heads of the Iranians not to create additional problems.

When the resolution calls for questioning people, including the President of Iran, and calls for restrictions on travel outside Iranian borders -- this is very bad.

Albright: UNSCOM is very, very important to everyone. These experts on WMD are carrying out work that could be verifiable, but when Ekeus went to inspect, he was interrupted. In New York we are trying to look at a modified version of a resolution and to set a time limit that could be

suspended. The travel ban would be tied to progress on WMD. So the resolution would be different from the one that you spoke to. It is important for us to restate the terms because when Ambassador Butler arrives he must be seen as having a lot of support. Could you give Sergei [Lavrov] instructions to work on the resolution. However, if you work on it, you must vote for it.

Primakov: I already sent a telegram which says that he should try to participate in this document and remove our concerns, but not introduce new sanctions.

Albright: Not even a travel ban?

Primakov: Neither Egypt nor France nor China would support any new sanctions. This is very complicated but I agree that we must positively confirm our position. You have to understand their psychology. They feel that we are not only wanting them to show us how their President's location is protected, but during the questioning we even want to know what they have done with their Presidential Guard, the sequences, etc. This really makes Iraq bristle. As a matter of fact, your recent speech really frightened them when you said "until the regime goes away."

Albright: The way that we see it is that they protect the Republican Guard areas and the areas where Saddam is located, but they really use these sites to hide things. They feel that this is a good cover to hide documents related to WMD, records and pieces of equipment. We honor the sites that are important to them, but we do not want them to use these sites as hiding places.

Primakov: (Laughs) If they really wanted to hide documents, it would be a matter of no more than changing several suitcases. They could do so on the territory of Iraq in a way in which no one would even find them. They could hide these documents in any village.

Albright: We really disagree with you on this one, but what we need is real criteria. Do you agree with ~~agree with~~ Ekeus that they have SCUDS?

Primakov: During the Iran/Iraq war they used everything they had. The Ekaus Commission should work, ~~should work~~ but we should first adopt criteria, otherwise this thing would be endless.

Albright: But they do not want to cooperate.

Primakov: They do not fully cooperate with anything that is connected with Saddam Hussein or the Guard.

Albright: He uses the Guard to cover up information.

Primakov: Lets take a look into the future, at questions like Afghanistan, and contemplate what would happen if the Turks decide to move away from the West and go in firm support of Islam. You know that if we push them too far Turkey and Iraq will get together much more closely.

Similar to the Taliban in Afghanistan, neither the Taliban, nor Malek, nor ~~one~~ ^{any one} can win there without forming a coalition. It's like a pendulum swinging back and forth.

Albright: We agree with you on the coalition part.

Primakov: Yes, Pakistan supported only one side and they gave them supplies and things. Rumor has it that U.S. intelligence set some things up there.

Albright: We did not.

Primakov: On the 27th of June we are going to sign a document with the Tajiks and we are inviting the Pakistani Foreign Minister. I want to talk to him. Magafan (?) and I have already spoken. He is close to the Pakistanis.

Albright: Can we go back to Iraq? I hope Sergei looks at the amended resolution and the travel limits (Here she reads off several of the bullets from her talking points). And another thing, we are seeing infractions of the no-fly zone. They are trying to bully us by flying more people. We suggest that we should try to figure out how to allow flights that respect the religious issues. Is these are really humanitarian flights then we should devise a way for a notification mechanism to be installed so that these humanitarian flights can be reasonable.

Primakov: You are escalating sanctions and trying to limit internal flights, This simply won't go. We have not supported the zone but we still tell them not to violate it. Now you want to stop them from flying over Baghdad. How can we prevent escalating this problem by mistake?

This would escalate the sanctions.

Albright: They are not even living up to the old sanctions.

Primakov: I am not talking now about a Security Council resolution, only about our bilaterals. Now you want to extend it to the whole territory of Iraq. Let's make them do something else: set up a commission to look, but not escalate the sanctions. I know you have an irritation over this, but let's go about this in a thoughtful manner. All Arab countries will help them except Kuwait and no Arab countries will support this.

Albright: Saddam is a threat to the region, and I say this because it is in our own national interests. We will keep at it forever even if we have to do so alone. They need to comply especially with the WMD.

Primakov: We need to talk seriously with them. We need criteria, i.e. "if you do so & so by such & such date, then paragraph 23 will be put into force, otherwise, the sanctions on everything else will stay. It will stay on weapons, on oil, etc. Ekaus and Tariq-Aziz have met. Aziz tells me it was a good meeting. Then Ekaus comes back here & says completely different things. What do we want? Do we want to end up with a poor Iraq that is going to be helped by all of the other Arab states? We know that there is no way we are going to replace the regime. Saddam has no opposition, he holds onto power very tightly. He uses his intelligence effectively. Egypt is different from Iraq. The people are different.

Albright: We will not agree on this.

Talbott: May I ask a question?

Primakov: We need a time line and a list of things they have to do and a what will happen if they do or not do these things..... 3 months or another 3 months or then 6 months more.

Talbott: But you are talking tactics, not strategy.

Primakov: I assure you that he will not stick his neck out when he doesn't behave because he will get burned.

Albright: He hasn't been punished. If we let him he will find ways to buy weapons.

Primakov: What, you think he has no money? And besides, what weapons can he buy?

Albright: He can buy weapons parts and then there are those who are willing to supply him. Recently, some weapons parts were found hidden in a river.

Primakov: Don't exaggerate this issue.

Albright: Tell Aziz to cooperate with Ekeus. But let us not spoil our good mood.

Primakov: I have one question that I wanted to raise. We are happy that we are signing a variety of accords. As President Clinton said in Paris that before Denver and Madrid we should finish our work in Vienna on adapting the CFE Treaty. However, your negotiations^{PR} in Vienna have taken a much tougher stand. I will explain. The national limits, like the old limits of 1990 are fine, but we are opposed to collective limits. In Vienna we need to show that the Paris signing really works. Now your guys say that they cannot name any numbers. Here are two problems: a) To be practical, by the year 2001, we will review.....{here Mamedov jumps in and starts arguing with Primakov, who shushes him} ... review the limits that were in the original document which we want to adapt. We had a break-through when we spoke and when you understood our concerns that even if the first wave of NATO expansion takes place, it will not increase the ceilings agreed upon earlier by the 16 countries in the treaty. In 2001 we will once again take a look at the ceilings....{Mamedov gets very exercised, raises his voice in saying that the U.S. promised to give Russia some specific numbers and he continues to talk "Solana said if new members came in the limits will not be raised."}

Primakov: b) We are close and it is in our interests to remember that the U.S. said in Vienna that its not the percentage but the absolute numbers they would give us. Let's say it could be no more than 3 brigades or X brigades, etc., but we need progress.

Talbott: Tomorrow we will take a look at this again and we feel that your negotiators should try to set up some limits {Again, Mamedov jumps in and says we don't want to establish new limits but retain limits we already

had ^{in the} treaty which is in force.} We are just going round and round on this issue. Secretary Albright is clear when she says that sufficiency ceilings do not work. Our reply is same as before, lets put something on the table by both countries, not just to look at total aggregates.....

Primakov: You said that by 2001 you don't intend to limit our national ceilings. In adapting the treaty we can use your principle, but give us the numbers. If 3 new countries come into NATO then the number 3.5 thousand will increase: aviation, tanks, APCs, etc.

Talbott: You know there are basic problems there, including your persistent attempt to include aircraft.

Mamedov: Tomorrow we will talk about all of this.

Talbott: There is probably not enough time left before Madrid to set things up as our Presidents want it.

Albright: On START II President Clinton will ask President Yeltsin where matters stand. {Here she refers to and reads several of her talking points on the Helsinki meeting}.

Primakov: We are doing a lot to get START II ratified by this fall.

Mamedov: Our enemies tried to kill the whole thing before we got to Denver.

Albright: Here's our reply to your last paper. {She hands him a paper}.

Primakov: On START III we have this General Rokhlin, like your Jesse Helms. Our specialists Rogov, Ivashov, and Dvorkin talked to me and we feel that we can come down not only to the 2.5 thousand warheads, but even less. This is strictly an unofficial, confidential position.

I will meet Rogov again later. We've been working very hard....don't think we haven't wanted to...we need it ourselves, even if only for our own economic reasons.

Mamedov: Zuganov would love this — he would love to kill this whole package in one fell swoop: START II, NATO-Russia, CFE — the whole thing.

Primakov: In September the Duma will be holding hearings and I am ready to appear before it and defend our position. Now we will move to START II next.

Talbott: Doesn't this mean that START II would end up at the end of the chain?

Mamedov: We cannot do START II without agreeing to the demarcation paper.

Primakov: I propose that we do:

- 1) NATO Discussion
- 2) Demarcation Paper to be ready
(need answers on the protocol)
- 3) START II

Albright: That's a long way down the road.

Mamedov: We will have to or else do you want to do this without this sequence?

Albright: We are also very concerned about this religious law that is moving through your Duma.

Primakov: (mutters to Mamedov, confused about what the issue is).

Albright: This will hurt a lot because it will not be understood in the States...it will hurt the atmosphere in the States, including on Jackson-Vanik, especially coming on top of the extension of exit visa restrictions.

Primakov: {still confused, tries to make a joke about Vanik sounding like venik in Russian, which means straw broom. Then, turning serious....}. We are in no way making the regulations any more harsh. We are limiting only those specialists who worked with missiles and nuclear weapons. We are all interested in getting over this thing. We are not discriminating against Jews.

Tomorrow Yeltsin will talk about Birmingham and he will say a lot of positive things. In paragraph 2 he will talk about Russia. He will not go to Madrid. Now as far as my going to Hong-Kong with you, I will meet

you there, but will play a small part.

Talbott: Who will represent you in Madrid?

Primakov: Ambassador Komplektov.

{shifts subjects, jokes about Berezovsky, clearly nervous about his access to American officials}

Talbott: Berezovsky was here recently, but he went home before coming to Washington and was seen only by Holbrooke. You and Secretary Albright have your channel; Yuri and I have ours; now we have the Berezovsky-Holbrooke channel.

Primakov: Sounds right to me. As for my channel with you, Madeleine, after Madrid, there is July and white nights in Russia.

Albright: That's one reason I'd like to come to St. Petersburg.

Primakov: You know that Piatrovsky's son is an old friend of mine and a marvelous guy. He could show us the palace at night.

Talbott: Your president has invited our president to Russia.

Primakov: Yes, in Paris he extended the invitation.

Talbott: Now I say this just so that we can keep the sequence straight. Strictly speaking, it is President Clinton's turn to host. Denver really doesn't count since it is an international event. Please understand, I am not saying no, but it will really, really be hard for him to come to Russia...not impossible...but very hard...mostly it has to do with his schedule.

But it would be almost impossible if there were no major business to transact — such as the exchange of instruments of ratification for START II.

Primakov {laughs}: I thought so! Linkage! We'll not fight it; we'll see where it makes most sense to have the Summit.

Albright: Okay, but you keep saying you want to get START II ratified.

We also have another issue...we need help with Sen. Smith's schedule during his Russia visit.

Primakov: I met him when I was KGB head. But meeting with every Senator who comes to Moscow isn't so easy. Anyway, we'll see what's possible.

Albright: This is really an important issue.

Primakov: You know that on Aug. 5 I am going away for a 2 week vacation...by the way you know that I get along well with Aliyev.

{At this point Strobe tells the story of his being PNGed by the USSR for 5 years until Primakov's old friend Valentin Kamenev took him to lunch and told him he was "rehabilitated." That led to a trip to Baku in 1980, and a meeting with Aliyev.}

Primakov: Aliyev is about 73 and he had a horribly serious and widespread heart attack in the 80's...

Now about the Middle East Peace Process.

Albright: {She reads part of her talkers and says that she wants to send Dennis Ross to Moscow to consult. Suggests a real dialog^{ve} on a whole range of things between Dennis and Posovalyuk.}

Primakov: In the M.E. we need to reactivate and re-energize the process.

Albright: We agree: the Palestinians have to understand what security means to Israel and the Israelis cannot take up the permanent status issue just now.

Primakov: The Palestinians would go forward in a big way if Netanyahu stopped the construction. He says a lot, but his is the next step. Even a moratorium would help.

Albright: Dennis will say more when he goes to Moscow, but some steps like the airport. Bibi is hard to persuade. Other steps to help the Palestinians have been taken. At the same time, the law on death to those who sell land is real bad. They are afraid that all of the land will be bought up.

Primakov: Palestinians will try to repeat what the Israelis did. They will try to repeat a fait accompli by building roads, airports, seaports, etc. This will bring about a conflict. Also Bibi must know that if Arafat goes, it will be worse. Abu Mazen is a good man, Yasin d'Arcebo (?)

Albright: This law makes it easy for Arafat to make Bibi look good.

Primakov: If I were in his shoes, I would do the same thing.

Albright: This is leading to an explosion.

Primakov: Have you spoken to Egypt about this?

Albright: They share the same feeling as we; they understand the trade-off between land and security.

Primakov: We need to get Syria into this thing as well. Posovalyuk did not meet with Khatemi. No one expected this Velyoti letter, but it will be helpful. We made a bit of progress in Georgia and Abkhazia. I met with Arzembeij and Minagapeshvili (FM Georgia). The Abkhazians accept, but Georgia wants to change the document. Shevernadze is under pressure from his parliament. The Georgian parliament wants us to pull out by July 31 and remove our peacekeeping forces. Now, either we are being blackmailed, which we will not allow, or that is the real position of Georgia.

I worked on this myself until 2:00 A.M. in the morning when we worked out a deal and initialed it. When Ardzen gets back to Sukhumi his opponents are going to fight with him.

Albright: Finally, I want to say that when I met with the Japanese today, they asked how the G-8 is going to work. They want improvement on Sakhalin. It would be useful to improve Russian/Japanese relations.

Primakov: When Nemtsov went to Japan, they liked him. But he did not speak about the Northern territories. The Japanese did, however, talk about Sakhalin I and II and the \$10 million. Nemtsov talked about fisheries and other things where we made good progress. We have demilitarized the Kurils and now people can get visas to come and visit the graves of their ancestors.

Albright: Also Japan wants a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Primakov: We don't want too many countries to have a veto.

Albright: We've not talked to them (Japan) about this, and no veto.

Primakov: We do not want to enlarge the club -- that's our feeling.